TACKLING THE STREET SEX TRADE

A MULTI-AGENCY STRATEGY FOR LUTON
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Appendices

1. Table of different approaches to dealing with the on street-sex trade
2. Table of Resources
1. Introduction

Tackling the Street Sex Trade is the first dedicated prostitution strategy developed by soLUTiONs, Luton’s Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

The strategy has been developed as a result of growing concerns articulated by partners, residents and businesses about the impact of prostitution on both the town and its communities, and the risks faced by individuals engaging in the sex trade.

Prostitution is most commonly defined as the exchange of sexual services for some form of payment (usually money or drugs). This can take place on the street or in massage parlours or saunas, through escort agencies or at private addresses.

It is difficult to be precise about the scale and prevalence of prostitution in the U.K., however we know that it exists in most towns and cities, sometimes on the street, but also in commercial premises and private residential properties. The Home Office has estimated that there could be as many as 80,000 people involved in prostitution in the UK with up to 70% entering into the sex trade as children or young people. Prostitution takes place in a variety of ways and involves both men and women, girls and boys. Those involved are far from a homogeneous group, however common characteristics include:

- History of Abuse: As many as 85% of those involved in prostitution report physical abuse in the family, with 45% reporting familial sexual abuse.
- Homelessness: Many report having run away from home, or having suffered periods of homelessness.
- Problematic Drug Use; as many as 95% of those involved in street-based prostitution are believed to have significant problematic drug use problems.
- History of poor school attendance and being in care.

2. Local Background

Luton is a large urban authority consisting of 19 wards with a population of approximately 202,500. The town has greater similarities to inner city communities than to the surrounding towns and cities in its region.

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1 Paying the Price: a consultation paper. Home Office 2004
2 Church et al. 2001
The town is ethnically diverse, with just over one third of the population being of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) origin with significant Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and African Caribbean communities. The diversity of the population has recently increased both with the arrival of foreign students and the migration of citizens from other EU countries, notably Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries with one in five of the population being born outside the UK.

Unemployment remains comparatively high at 5.0%, compared to the East of England and national averages. Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head in Luton is £11,935 which is lower than the East of England and national averages.

Recent research undertaken by Ipsos MORI indicates that Luton is the fifth most 'challenged' area outside London in terms of factors that impact on public perception but which public services have little control over (such as Indices of Multiple Deprivation, ethnic diversity, young people, population churn, physical living conditions etc).

Luton does however benefit from a variety of transport links including an international airport and direct rail links to London St Pancras. The M1 provides a link from Luton to the rest of Britain’s road network and the new East Luton Corridor links the town, airport and motorway.

Like many other towns and cities both within and outside the UK, areas of the Luton have and continue to be affected by prostitution.

In developing the strategy the Community Safety Partnership has analysed and considered information and data from a range of partners to clearly identify the local dynamics and issues. This analysis has identified that;

- Of the known forms of prostitution operating within the town it is the highly visible on-street sex trade which appears to be having the most significant and detrimental impact on our town and communities.

- Although reports relating to the on-street sex trade have been received from a number of wards within the town this activity is most concentrated in a relatively small geographical area close to the town centre and train station.

- Those seeking to buy sex are travelling to the affected areas both in vehicles and on foot.

- All those currently identified as engaged in selling sex “on-street” in Luton are women over the age of 21.
• The vast majority of those involved in selling sex have drug and/or alcohol misuse problems and a history of abuse and/or emotional trauma,

• Those purchasing sex are predominantly men. Most are residents of the town although approximately a quarter are visitors to Luton³.

The CSP recognises that there is a need for further and more detailed analysis of the issue to ensure that the Partnership approach is evidenced based and effectively targeting the local dynamics and underlying causes of this problem.

Furthermore whilst the initial analysis of the local data appears to confirm a number of national findings, in particular the correlation between the street sex trade and drug and alcohol abuse, there are also variations in the local picture which are not consistent with the national data and which require further consideration. In particular the Home Office estimates that as many as 70% of women engaged in prostitution become involved as children or young people, yet there is currently no evidence of children or young people engaging in the on-street sex trade locally (although one hypothesis is that younger women and girls may be involved in less visible forms of prostitution). As establishing how and when individuals commence working in the sex trade will be pivotal to developing effective preventative work it is clear that further analysis in this area is required.

As such developing a detailed local evidence base and problem profile will feature as a significant piece of work throughout the duration of the strategy and will be used to inform the development of key initiatives and interventions and broader partnership working.

3. The National Policy Context

Selling sex is not currently a criminal offence in Britain. This is the subject of extensive public, political and academic debate with some commentators arguing for tougher legislation and penalties for those involved in sex work and others arguing for more a permissive approach. Although this debate has clear implications for the development of both policing, community safety and health and social care policy, as a Partnership we are responsible for operating within the existing legal framework and while selling sex is not currently criminalised, there are many pieces of legislation which seek to regulate and limit the effects of on-street sex trade.

The table below outlines the main legislation currently relating specifically to street sex work in England and Wales and the penalties attached to these offences.

³ Data from Operation Turtle 2013
Table 1: Key legislation pertaining to street sex work, England and Wales

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<tr>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Maximum penalty</th>
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<tr>
<td>Soliciting or loitering for purposes of prostitution</td>
<td>1959 Street Offences Act</td>
<td>A Fine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Causing or inciting prostitution for gain</td>
<td>1956 Sexual Offences Act 2003 Sexual Offences Act</td>
<td>Six months’ imprisonment or fine (magistrates court) to seven years’ imprisonment (crown court)</td>
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<td>Kerb crawling (with persistence and in a manner likely to cause annoyance)</td>
<td>1985 Sexual Offences Act 2001 Criminal Justice and Police Act 2003 Sexual Offences Act</td>
<td>Arrestable offence: seizure of vehicle or driving ban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antisocial behaviour</td>
<td>1998 Crime and Disorder Act</td>
<td>Serving of Anti-Social Behaviour Order, with up to five years’ imprisonment or up to six months’ imprisonment plus fine for breach</td>
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Approaches to tackling the on-street sex trade have tended to focus on the activities of those selling sex rather than those who purchase it. There is often a general assumption that those involved are in control of their situation. However, evidence shows that this can be far from true: high levels of childhood neglect; emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse; domestic abuse; emotional trauma; homelessness; problematic drug use; and poverty experienced by those involved strongly suggest the overriding motivation is survival⁴.

Nationally, a common pattern appears to be for men and women to be trapped in street-based prostitution after having been coerced into it at a young age, or to fund their own, and often their partner’s, problematic drug use. Those involved in this way rarely benefit, apart from ensuring their drug supply. The profits of the ‘trade’ go straight into the pockets of drug dealers. Therefore while for a very small minority selling sex may represent financially profitable work, for the vast majority involved in the on-street sex trade the reality is very different⁵.

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⁴ Paying the Price 2004
⁵ Paying the Price 2004
4. Developing the Strategy

This strategy reflects the initial findings of the Community Safety Partnership’s analysis of the local data. As such the strategy typically refers to “women who sell sex” as opposed to a more gender neutral term. This reflects the local data that those selling sex on the street in Luton are exclusively women, however the partnership response detailed in this strategy and specifically the interventions it proposes to support those involved in selling sex to exit, are designed to be tailored to each individual on a case by case basis. As such should it become evident that men are also involved in directly selling sex, the local response will be robust enough to respond appropriately.

The strategy also refers to, and is in fact titled; “Tackling the Street Sex Trade”, in recognition that it is this form of prostitution which is causing the most harm to our residents and consequently this form of prostitution the CSP is most keen to address. In specifically targeting the on-street sex trade the CSP recognises that it is possible that there may be an inadvertent increase in “off-street “activity. While it is a generally held view that this is a less harmful form of the sex trade for communities, the CSP is clear that where there is evidence of harm or exploitation occurring, off-street premises will also be targeted.

In the development of this strategy, the Community Safety Partnership has looked extensively at national guidance and research, as well as existing Home Office and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) strategies, to identify the underpinning factors and issues associated with the on street sex trade and for evidence of effective approaches to tackling this problem.

“The victims of the so-called ‘trade’ are the young boys and girls, and the men and women trapped in it. But communities are also victims as street-based prostitution increases the general level of disorder and creates a climate of criminality. Those who choose to be involved should understand what it is like to live in an area in which kerb crawlers habitually harass young women and where used condoms and dirty needles are regularly dumped in front gardens.”

Paying the Price
Government Consultation 2004

The Partnership has also listened to the concerns and experiences of the residents and communities in Luton. This has highlighted the direct impact that the problem of on street sex work is having on individuals, families and businesses within the town. Residents in areas where on street sex work is known to take place have reported feeling threatened, intimidated, and being propositioned by both women selling sex and men seeking to buy it. They have
also reported the detrimental effect that the street sex trade has on the local environment; an increase in litter (including used condoms and syringes); increased noise and traffic; and the visibility of individuals publically engaging in sexual activity. It is also evident that there is a public perception that the on-street sex trade has contributed to an increase in other types of offending including burglary and drug dealing.

In developing the strategy the Partnership has also explored models of working which have been widely acknowledged as representing best practice including projects in Ipswich, South London, Nottingham, Manchester, Stockton-on-tees and Bristol. A summary of the different approaches and outcomes from each of these initiatives is provided in Appendix 1 of this strategy. Each of these models has highlighted the importance of effective and co-ordinated multi-agency working. Indeed the Home Office’s 2006 Co-ordinated Strategy acknowledges; "Addressing prostitution will require strong partnerships, involving a wide range of enforcement and support agencies. Success in delivering safer communities through a significant reduction in street prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation will depend on the will and commitment of local partnerships to address prostitution with confidence and energy – confidence that it really is possible to make a difference, and energy to tackle the many challenges involved.”

Other common themes within successful initiatives include a focus on prevention and developing exit strategies for those already involved in the on street sex trade.

Case Study – Ipswich

Following the murders of 5 women involved in the on-street sex trade in Ipswich in 2006, agencies adopted a new multi-agency strategy focussing on a more holistic approach to tackling the issue.

Helping women involved in on-street prostitution to stop using drugs was an important part of the multi-agency approach in Ipswich led to a significant reduction in the number of women involved in street prostitution. Action taken to achieve this included:

- Prioritising funding for residential drug rehabilitation for sex workers;
- Funding a Community Drugs Team to offer extended opening hours;

6 Home Office 2006: A Co-ordinated Prostitution Strategy
Main achievements

- 85 women have been in contact with the project, and around 30 are still being intensively helped (although 4 of these are ‘hard to reach’);
- Of the 30 women being helped, 8 women are drug free, and 19 are still in drug treatment. 26 are housed and 4 homeless.

By contrast there is little evidence that initiatives which have endorsed vigorous enforcement action against women selling sex have resulted in any sustainable improvement. One Home Office research study\(^7\) concluded “the use of “traditional” enforcement involving police crackdowns did not appear to reduce disorder or nuisance for the local community”. Further guidance published by the Home Office’s Drug Strategy Directorate\(^8\) adds: “To be effective, enforcement has to be set in the context of interventions that provide treatment and other services for drug users”.

There is however some evidence that such enforcement approaches can result in increasing the vulnerability of women involved in the street sex trade, for example by displacing such activity to remote locations where there is an increased risk of physical attacks against women selling sex.

Furthermore as soliciting is a summary-only offence, the sentencing options of the courts are very limited and convictions of this nature most commonly result in either a conditional discharge or a fine. This can have the unintended effect of actually increasing the amount of time that women selling sex are visible on the streets as they seek additional income to pay off court fines - thus creating a cycle of soliciting and arrest as illustrated on the next page.

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\(^7\) Home Office Research Study 279. Tackling Street Prostitution: Towards an holistic approach. Marianne Hester and Nicole Westmarland. University of Bristol

\(^8\) Solutions and Strategies drug problems and street sex markets. Gillian Hunter, Tiggey May and the Drug Strategy Directorate. 2004
Diagram 1: Illustration of the cycle of offending and punishment observed in relation to traditional enforcement action.

This model illustrates the ineffectiveness of taking enforcement action against women who sell sex, without ensuring that it is undertaken in conjunction with structured support and services to break this cycle of behaviour.

This is reflected in the 2011 ACPO Strategy\(^9\) which recommends:

“Arresting on-street sex workers under the existing laws only as part of a staged approach that includes warnings, police engagement with local support projects, voluntary engagements with projects, existing diversionary mechanisms and Engagement and Support Orders (ESOs)”

The CSP recognises the significance of this model and the guidance from ACPO and is committed to adopting an approach which promotes and supports individuals to exit the on-street sex trade as opposed to perpetuating their involvement in it.

5. **Our Aims**

In Luton, the Community Safety Partnership is committed to working with a broad range of agencies and organisations to address the problems associated with the on-street sex trade and to reduce the harm and impact on businesses, residents, communities and individuals affected by it, including those who sell sex.

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\(^9\) ACPO Strategy & Supporting Operational Guidance for Policing Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation. 2011
Underpinning this commitment is the belief that the on-street sex trade is not inevitable and that through joint working, implementing evidenced based interventions and by effectively targeted resources the Partnership can, and will, remove the on-street sex trade from the streets of Luton.

**Overall Aim**

Our overall aim is to protect our communities and residents from the harm associated with the on street sex trade, by engaging in sustained and co-ordinated multi agency initiatives to remove the on-street sex trade from Luton by 2018.

We will work to accomplish our overall aim by focussing on three interconnected strands of activity; **Tackling and reducing demand** for sexual services, **Developing Routes Out** for those already involved and **Prevention**; ensuring individuals, particularly children and young people, are safe from sexual exploitation and can avoid becoming involved in the on-street sex trade.

By effectively addressing each of these strands it will be possible to permanently disrupt the supply and demand dynamic which perpetuates the on-street sex trade, and ultimately bring an end to this activity in Luton.

Underpinning or framing this work is a further strand of activity: **Ensuring Justice**; ensuring that serious and organised crime is addressed and that those who control, coerce, abuse or exploit others are brought to justice.

Ensuring Justice is pivotal not only to the success of the strands above (and therefore to the overall aim of removing the on-street sex trade from Luton), but also to protecting our communities and residents from a wider range of crime, antisocial behaviour and fear of crime.

The inter-dependency between the activity strands identified within the strategy is illustrated in the diagram below which demonstrates the Partnership’s aim of Protecting Communities by removing the on-street sex trade through Prevention, Tackling demand, Developing exits and Ensuring justice.
Protecting our communities and residents is at the heart of both the Partnership and everything that we do. The issues associated with the on-street sex trade are clear to all who live and work in towns and cities with sex markets. As well as violence and exploitation, and the misery from serious drug misuse experienced by the majority of those involved, the on-street sex trade can also mean neighbourhood nuisance. No one should be expected to tolerate harassment from kerb crawlers or sex workers, drug-related litter (including used condoms and needles), public sex acts, and the general degradation of areas used for the on-street sex trade.

This level of nuisance impacts on relatively few residents and local businesses but, for those affected, it is hugely distressing. Communities have a right to expect protection from neighbourhood nuisance but, while some areas have very active residents’ groups focusing on this issue, many people feel powerless. The concerns of communities must be addressed in a way that can achieve a long-term solution.

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Diagram developed by Luton CSP
As stated, it is the overall aim of this strategy to remove the on-street sex trade from Luton by 2018. This time scale recognises the complexities of the issues involved and reflects our aim that this should represent a permanent solution to this problem as opposed to a short term but unsustainable improvement.

However, the Partnership recognises that five years is too long for the residents and communities affected by the on-street sex trade to wait for an end to the nuisance and harm they are experiencing.

To this end, whilst this is a five year strategy, the Partnership is committed to undertaking a range of immediate targeted measures in the areas most affected to alleviate the nuisance affecting local residents and businesses including:

- Ensuring victims of Anti-Social Behaviour are referred to the ASB Priority Team for tailored responses; including risk assessment and the co-ordination of activity to assist and support residents.

- Recognising where the built environment encourages the on-street sex trade to develop, and addressing this by introducing further environmental measures to deter and disrupt on-street sex work including general improvements to the built and natural environment.

- Maintain the “dawn patrol” to clear up litter associated with the on-street sex trade and drug use.

- Utilising legislative powers to disperse those selling on-street sex from residential areas.

Furthermore it is our belief that as a result of Partnership the residents and communities of Luton should notice a significant and sustained reduction in the on-street sex trade throughout the lifespan of this strategy culminating in a cessation of the on-street sex trade by 2018.

6. Strands of Activity

The first three strands of activity identified in this strategy; Tackling Demand, Developing Exits Out and Prevention, are intrinsically linked.

It is anticipated that reducing demand for the on-street sex trade will limit the financial rewards for those engaged in this activity and as such will incentivise and motivate those currently involved to exit this type of work. By simultaneously offering improved support to individuals who are seeking to exit the on-street sex trade there is an opportunity to create a significant reduction in the availability of sex for sale, which if effectively sustained, will make it more difficult for men to
purchase sex and may prompt those committed to doing so to source it elsewhere.

A reduction in supply created by women exiting the sex trade will however only be sustainable if we can actively prevent other individuals from entering the on-trade. Prevention is therefore a vital component of this approach, both in terms of securing a reduction in the availability of on street sex trade but also in relation to safeguarding children and young people from exploitation and abuse.

As tackling demand and supporting women to exit becomes less resource intensive (due to reducing numbers requiring support), these resources will be redirected to activities with a greater focus on prevention.

It is therefore anticipated that while the early stages of the implementation of the strategy will be characterised by a more visible partnership focus on disrupting supply and demand, over time the model will shift to one which is more focussed on prevention as illustrated below.

The continued targeting of resources into the Tackling demand / Developing Routes Out strands in the final years of the strategy is in recognition of the need for ongoing enforcement action to deter kerb crawlers from returning to an area leading to a re-emergence of the on-street sex trade there.

Diagram 3: Expected redistribution of Partnership activity and resources over the period of the Strategy

11 The chart represents the focus of activity relating to the Community Safety Partnership. However, preventative work is also undertaken by the Luton Safeguarding and Health and Wellbeing Boards.
7. Tackling demand

The on-street sex trade may be driven by economic necessity but it can only exist because there is a demand for it. A coordinated strategy designed to reduce its prevalence must address demand as well as tackle the factors that lead individuals to become involved in its supply. To do this there must be a clear and common understanding of the issues involved in order to develop a response to deter those who create that demand. Buying sex can mean supporting the illegal drugs industry, as well as perpetuating a situation in which women may be subject to violence and exploitation. It can also mean contributing to the current rise in Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

As previously discussed this strategy recognises that enforcement has a key role to play, particularly with respect to those who create the demand for the on-street sex trade. Accounts from residents indicate that the presence of kerb crawlers and those who buy sex on foot in an area has a significant impact on perceptions of safety and can result in slow moving traffic, congestion and noise and the unwanted propositioning of local residents including young people.

To this end dedicated targeted Police enforcement activity is regularly undertaken with over 100 arrests related to the on-street sex trade between January 2013 and March 2013.

Bedfordshire Police and the wider Community Safety Partnership have agreed and implemented a zero-tolerance approach to kerb-crawling in Luton. All identified perpetrators, including first time offenders, will be arrested and will be required to provide their fingerprints and a sample of their DNA which will be added to the National DNA Database.

Additionally:

- The CSP will send a clear message that kerb crawling will not be tolerated and will consider a range of methods to promote and highlight this stance including: media coverage of enforcement action, use of warning signs in localities affected, sending warning letters to those identified as buying or attempting to buy sex.

- There will be continued targeted Police enforcement activity to deter and disrupt the sex market.
• We will seek to raise awareness of the harm caused by buying sex through the use of media messages and will explore the use of kerb crawler re-education programmes.

8. Developing Routes Out

Exiting sex work is a long-term and complex process that will involve receiving help and support to deal with a whole range of practical and emotional issues. Evidence from a two year study conducted by London South Bank University and Eaves\textsuperscript{12} highlights that women can and do wish to leave prostitution. The study evidences the need for services to support women who sell sex to overcome the barriers which can prevent them from exiting from this work. Nine specific barriers are identified; problematic drug use, accommodation issues, physical and mental health problems, history of childhood violence; criminalisation; financial problems; experiencing coercion from others; lack of training or qualifications; and age of entry (specifically those who began selling sex at a young age).

Exiting is, therefore, not a linear process and individuals may attempt to leave a number of times\textsuperscript{13}. In a hierarchy of needs, providing drug treatment and responding to health and accommodation problems will have to be addressed.

The CSP recognises the importance of assisting women to overcome these barriers and exit on-street sex work as part of ensuring a sustained and visible reduction. To this effect, developing routes out for those already involved is a pivotal strand of this strategy, and the Partnership will continue to work with agencies and services which support those selling sex to exit by addressing the barriers which can prevent this.

The Partnership also recognises that, given the range and complexity of the barriers which can affect the exit process, this approach is unlikely to deliver instant results; however it is a fundamental strand to ensuring long term lasting change.

\textbf{Make a Change Team}

To support women to exit the on-street sex trade, the Partnership will adopt a multi-agency case-management approach based upon the

\textsuperscript{12} Breaking down the barriers: A study of how women exit prostitution. Julie Bindel, Laura Brown, Helen Easton Roger Matthews and Lisa Reynolds Eaves and London South Bank University (LSBU)

\textsuperscript{13} Solutions and Strategies drug problems and street sex markets. Gillian Hunter, Tiggey May and the Drug Strategy Directorate. 2004
successful Ipswich “Make a change “ model to co-ordinate services and interventions to help women to overcome the barriers to exit, and to develop the skills and tools necessary to permanently cease engaging in the on-street sex trade.

Where individuals are identified to pose a high risk of re-offending, this support may be offered within the context of the existing Integrated Offender Management model.

For those for whom this approach would not be appropriate the partnership will develop and implement a new multi-disciplinary team to co-ordinates service provision and provide a case management approach. This will include:

- Ensure the provision of and access to drug and alcohol services.
- Work with housing providers to identify need and support individuals into safe accommodation
- Ensure access to healthcare provision to meet both the physical and mental health needs of individuals
- Work with partners to facilitate access into counselling and support services to address childhood experiences of violence and abuse
- Utilising existing multi-agency working arrangements and information sharing protocols to identify and bring to justice those who are harming and exploiting vulnerable children and adults.

All interventions will be developed on a case by case basis based on an individual analysis of need and risk assessment. Where those involved in selling sex opt not to engage with services then alternative disposals and enforcement options will be explored.

9. Prevention

As the work of the Partnership supports women to exit the on-street sex trade it is vital to ensure that they are not simply replaced by others moving into this work.

Research nationally indicates that many of those working in the on-street sex trade commence this work as children or young people, often as a result of abuse and/or exploitation.
The issues surrounding the sexual exploitation of children and young people are becoming increasingly well documented. A number of high profile incidents of the organised exploitation of vulnerable young people have highlighted the risks posed to young people, and the need for agencies and professionals to act to safeguard potential victims.

Since April 2013, Bedfordshire has adopted a structured multi-agency process to identifying and supporting children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation.

The SERAC (Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference) process ensures that any child or young person identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation is referred to a multi-agency panel of professionals for support and to ensure that information regarding risk and possible perpetrators is communicated across agencies.

This provides Partner agencies with an opportunity to gather and pool information; enabling them to identify trends and patterns of behaviour, the connections between individual cases and to identify individuals and potentially groups who may pose a risk to young people.

In the long term this approach will assist to safeguard not only the individual children and young people referred to the panel but (by providing information which will assist in addressing the underpinning issues and enable agencies to target those who pose a risk) will contribute to making the town a safer place for all children and young people\textsuperscript{14}.

The sexual exploitation of children and young people is a complex issue which is not wholly restricted to the on-street sex trade but which nonetheless has clear links to it. As a Community Safety Partnership we are committed to working closely with our Local Safeguarding Boards to address these broader issues and to hold those who abuse and exploit children and young people to account.

As a Partnership we will contribute to the work of the Safeguarding Boards to raise awareness among young people; both boys and girls, about safe and equal relationships and the dangers associated with prostitution, and to ensure that those who work with young people are able to recognise the warning signs and take appropriate action to safeguard those they believe to be at risk.

\textsuperscript{14} At time of writing SERAC is in its pilot phase. Initial findings are positive and it is anticipated this initiative will continue, if not alternative options will be explored.
The Community Safety Partnership is clear that using children and young people for the purposes of prostitution is child abuse. Offenders who buy sex from children and young people will be subject to the full weight of the law.

In the event that a child or young person under the age of 18, is identified as selling or being sold for sex, or at risk of selling or being sold for sex, the CSP will ensure local safeguarding policies and procedures are followed.

These policies recognise children and/or young people exploited for sexual purposes as victims of abuse and ensure that appropriate support and protection is identified.

10. **Ensuring Justice**

Disrupting sex markets will not be wholly successful unless we can remove the opportunity and advantage for those who use, abuse and exploit individuals through the on-street sex trade. This requires proactive policing and a robust legal framework with severe penalties. Bringing perpetrators to justice is the best way to disrupt commercial sexual exploitation and sends a clear message that it will not be tolerated.

This strand also recognises the links between the on-street sex trade and other criminality including drug dealing, and that many of those directly involved in selling sex will be doing so as a result of coercion, abuse and exploitation.

It acknowledges Home Office, ACPO and extensive academic research findings that street sex workers can be a vulnerable and marginalised group. Research\(^{15}\) shows high levels of violence and robbery against street sex workers, perpetuated by clients, passersby, ‘pimps’ or managers.

Sex workers may also be vulnerable to exploitation from drug dealers and other drug users and may experience coercion to sell sex to fund their drug use. It is also recognised that some women will be pressured to sell sex to fund the drug habits of others.

Both Home Office and ACPO guidance and strategies therefore clearly acknowledge the vulnerability of those who sell sex and the risk of violence and exploitation that they face. This acknowledgement requires that local agencies increase their understanding of this issue and ensure appropriate responses to address the needs of this group albeit balancing this responsibility with responding to the legitimate concerns of the wider community about street sex work and its impact on local residents and communities.

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\(^{15}\) McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; Phoenix, 2002; Hester and Westmarland, 2004
The Partnership will work robustly to identify and address the serious and organised crime (including violent and drug related offences) which frequently co-exists alongside the street sex trade.

Furthermore while the partnership approach is to support those selling sex to exit the on-street sex trade through the provision of co-ordinated intervention and support, enforcement action will be taken against those committing other offences or exploiting others.

As a Partnership we are committed to:

- Enforcing the law against those who coerce, exploit and abuse individuals as a means of addressing sexual exploitation and contributing to a reduction in the on-street sex trade.

- Investigating and acting on the links between the on-street sex trade and serious organised crime including drug dealing, robbery and trafficking, to protect victims and reduce overall crime in affected areas.

- Encouraging individuals who sell sex to report when they are the victims of violent or sexual crime and responding to these reports robustly and with sensitivity and respect.

- Taking enforcement action against those who harass, threaten or intimidate residents and members of the community including those directly involved in the on-street sex trade.

- Safeguarding any child or young person who is identified as engaging in commercial sexual activity by recognising them as a victim of abuse and by ensuring those buying sexual services from those under 18 are prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

11. Engaging with the Community

Multi-Agency activity to address the issue of the on-street sex trade has been undertaken in Luton for a number of years lead by a multi-agency group comprising of representation from Health Services, Luton Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police and CCTV Operators.

This led to the development a multi-agency action plan to reduce the demand for street sex in Luton and address the associated community safety issues.

As part of that action plan, the Partnership has undertaken targeted enforcement action, made changes to the physical environment of areas affected by the on-street sex trade to deter and disrupt the sex market and worked with statutory
and voluntary groups to develop services to support those engaged in the on-street sex trade to exit.

These measures have achieved some degree of success. Local health providers have reported that the provision of dedicated “women only” services (which provide a safe environment for vulnerable women to access multi-agency support to improve their health, emotional wellbeing, settle in secure housing, stabilise in drug treatment and live a drug free and independent life) has resulted in 50% of the women attending these services to exit sex work, some on a permanent basis.

**Local Case Study**

Late night outreach staff met Rita whilst she was street sex working to fund her drug habit. Her child was cared for by her grandmother. She was being exploited by a known drug dealer/pimp/serious offender, and she later disclosed domestic abuse. Drug workers attempted to find her a women’s refuge but this was unsuccessful because of her drug use.

Rita left the area to stay with friends but returned a few months later to start her drug treatment. She moved in with a different known drug dealer/pimp and was required to sell sex in order to stay at the property. Drug workers supported her to leave; she was rehoused but soon was evicted as she was not able to afford the rent.

Rita left the area again, returned in crisis and was in and out of drug services for a few months. When she returned again she had established contact with her child, had decided to live away from Luton but continued working with her drug worker to become drug free. She has achieved her ambition, is no longer street sex working and is having regular contact with her child.

However, the Partnership acknowledges that more needs to be done to ensure a sustained and perceptible reduction in the on street sex trade and that more must be done to engage and work with the community to develop and implement measures to ensure a balance between protecting the rights of residents and the local community to live without fear or the nuisance associated with the on-street sex trade and supporting vulnerable individuals to exit such work.

The partnership is therefore committed to:
• Ensuring residents and communities have the opportunity to inform and shape the direction of future initiatives and activity and are provided with frequent updates regarding the activity undertaken by partners and agencies to address the issues of on-street sex work by holding regular public meetings throughout the duration of the strategy.

• Working with representatives of the local communities affected by the on-street sex trade on multi-agency reference groups to inform and shape the direction of future initiatives and activity.

• Working with community based services to mediate between residents and those engaging in the on-street sex trade to produce collective benefits for all those concerned.

• Encouraging all residents to report concerns, incidents and issues to the Police, relevant local authority officers and/or elected representatives to assist them to obtain a full picture of the prevalence and impact within our communities.

“Good local strategies take account of the concerns and interest of all groups, including local residents, voluntary organisations and local partner agencies, as well as reaching out to those involved in prostitution themselves. Similarly, multi-agency approaches and partnership working can help all of the relevant issues to be tackled.

…. It is (also) important that the response to prostitution recognises people involved in prostitution as part of the community, and is developed with their involvement.”

Home Office, 2011. A review of Effective Practice in Responding to Prostitution

12. Delivering the Strategy

This strategy represents the joint commitment of the agencies and stakeholders discussed in this document to address and challenge the issues of the on-street sex trade in Luton.

As a Community Safety Partnership led approach this strategy is owned by the Community Safety Executive (CSE), a statutory multi-agency body consisting of senior representatives from the “responsible authorities” as identified in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Community Safety Executive is currently
chaired by the Chief Executive of Bedfordshire Probation Trust, and is responsible for setting the strategic direction of partnership activity in Luton.

However it is recognised that the challenges posed by the on-street sex trade and many of the issues arising from it and detailed in this document extend beyond the responsibilities of the CSP and that there are clear overlaps and parallels with the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and both Local Safeguarding Boards. As such, while the strategy is owned by the CSE the objectives and principles of this strategy have also been endorsed and approved by the Luton Safeguarding Adults Board, Luton Safeguarding Children Board and the Luton Heath and Wellbeing Board16 and regular updates and progress reports on the implementation will be made available to these boards on request.

13. Resourcing the Strategy

This strategy details a new approach to resolving the on-street sex trade which will require the long term commitment and effort of partners across the town to deliver. The strategy also requires a significant level of resources to deliver the stated objectives.

The cross cutting nature of the issues and challenges posed by the on-street sex trade and the recognition from partners of the harm and distress it causes has enabled the CSP to draw on a range of funding streams to provide additional resources to support the work detailed in this strategy.

Appendix 2 provides a summary of the financial and other resource commitments made by partners to support and deliver the objectives of this strategy. This includes significant levels of funding from the Public Health Grant and Local Authority Budgets.

(Appendix 2 is not currently attached, as formal commitments are still being agreed)

14. Tackling the Street Sex Trade Action Plan

Central to the strategy is a multi-agency action plan, detailing the strategic priorities and identifying actions, outcomes and measures of success. The action plan names agencies and individuals leading areas of work and will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the objectives and priorities of the strategy are being met.

This regular review will also enable the partners to respond to potential changes in the problem profile resulting from partnership activity or other factors and

16 Timetabled for approval; HWB 17 July 2013, LSCB 25 Sept 2013
ensure the appropriate allocation and distribution of resources across the various strands of activity outlined in the strategy.

15. Governance and Accountability

In order to ensure that the strategy is effective and the objectives delivered, the Strategy will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation by the Community Safety Executive. These evaluations will be used to ensure that activity and resources are being utilised most effectively and that issues of performance are addressed promptly and decisively.

Progress updates on the strategy will also be provided to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire. The PCC is an elected representative charged with securing efficient and effective policing within the county, who has statutory powers to target community safety funding, direct police resources and hold the police to account. The current Police and Crime Plan, identifies Anti-Social Behaviour as a key priority stating that the:

"Police will prioritise and tackle persistent anti-social behaviour (ASB) which seriously undermines the quality of life for an individual or community..."

The PCC is therefore keen to ensure this strategy is effective and this particular form of ASB and the harm it poses to our communities and residents is removed.

Diagram 4: Luton Community Safety Partnership Group Structure
16. **Street Sex Trade Tactical and Operational Group**

While the Community Safety Executive is responsible for the content and direction of the Strategy, it has established the Street Sex Trade Tactical and Operational Group to oversee its implementation and delivery.

This group consists of senior officers and operational leads within partner agencies meets frequently and will provide regular reports to the Community Safety Executive.

These reports will detail the ongoing activity being undertaken by partners and should demonstrate the impact of the strategy by evidencing:

- Outcomes of police operations including enforcement action.
- A visible reduction in the number of women working on the street.
- A reduction in ASB complaints relating to the street sex trade
- Increase in individuals exiting the street sex trade

17. **Street Sex Trade Community Reference Group**

The CSE has also established a community reference group to ensure that the views and experiences of local communities and residents are reflected in the strategic aims and objectives of the Partnership. This group will also enable the Partnership to draw on the wealth of local expertise and knowledge by inviting representation from groups and individuals who can inform and guide the local response. The group will also provide an additional means of ensuring ongoing communication between residents and the partnership.

This will assist the Partnership to assess the effectiveness of the strategy and respond accordingly.
18. **Sources**

ACPO Strategy & Supporting Operational Guidance for Policing Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation. 2011


Breaking down the barriers: A study of how women exit prostitution. Julie Bindel, Laura Brown, Helen Easton Roger Matthews and Lisa Reynolds Eaves and London South Bank University (LSBU), 2012


Living and working in areas of street sex work. Jane Pitcher, Rosie Campbell, Phil Hubbard, Maggie O’Neill and Jane Scoular. Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2006

Paying the Price: a consultation process on prostitution, Home Office. July 2004

Prof David Wilson, Director of Birmingham City University’s Centre for Criminal Justice Policy and Research. 2009

Sex work on the streets: prostitutes and their clients, Mckeganey and Barnard, Open University Press, 1996

**Appendix One**

**Tackling the Street Sex Trade:**
*Review of Projects and Outcomes: July 2013*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name and Aim</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Key Features</th>
<th>Outcomes – what difference did it make?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iceni Project</td>
<td>Ipswich</td>
<td>- Community group set up</td>
<td>- On street sex trade now gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Remove On-street sex from Ipswich.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Specific police officers built relationship with workers</td>
<td>- Work now focussed on prevention instead through different routes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Following success of initial aim the project’s current aim is to support those with addiction and their families.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Encouraged community and workers to talk and build understanding</td>
<td>- Iceni project now focuses on supporting drug users and their families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Women given mobile phones to maintain contact</td>
<td>- 32 women identified and supported out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Focus on reducing clients as well as supply.</td>
<td>- Community group continues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Zero tolerance on kerb crawlers</td>
<td>- 137 kerb crawlers arrested in one year (2007-8)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Women supported with drug addiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- One off donation allowed women’s living costs to be paid so they could be moved out of area.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Location</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>The Chrysalis Project provides a staged, integrated accommodation pathway for women with complex needs who are exiting prostitution in South London.</td>
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<td>- Women exiting prostitution have been supported to reduce their substance use, improve their mental health and live safer, and be skilled to live independent lives.</td>
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<td>- Several women have become more economically active, finding a career path or starting their own business.</td>
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<td>- Helped women to avoid having their children taken into care where possible, and re-establish connections with family which have been lost during periods of involvement in street prostitution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ten women have been accommodated in the Commonweal flats since the outset of the project. All have remained in their flats or have moved on into fully independent accommodation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The three phases of support available to women through the Chrysalis Project provide significant cost savings to existing services and society, both now and in the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>POW Nottingham</td>
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<td>To provide a free, comprehensive, confidential drop-in and outreach service to those involved in prostitution and drug misuse; To provide information, support, advocacy, referrals to other agencies, basic counselling and advice on all matters relating to: safety whilst working as a prostitute; sexual health; reducing or ceasing drug use; social support; family planning; lifestyle changes; prevention and exiting from prostitution; To promote understanding and awareness in the wider community, amongst other voluntary agencies and statutory organisations on all matters regarding prostitution and drug use.</td>
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| MASH | Manchester | - Providing information, advice and support to female workers  
- Promote understanding in wider community  
- Support and encourage women to improve quality of life and personal wellbeing  
- Support to exit work via safe routes  
- Represent women on wider platform eg changing legislation, networking | 2011-12  
MASH worked with 502 women and 274 Individual women accessed activities at the MASH Centre.  
210 supported to healthier lifestyles.  
120 street workers and 60 indoor workers accessed the clinic at the MASH Centre.  
Our caseworkers provided intensive support to 90 women.  
25 women were supported in Styal prison.  
23 women accessed complementary therapies  
28 women accessed counselling  
27 women attended self-esteem workshops  
7 undertook self-defence training  
7 did First Aid Training  
32 accessed Occupational Therapy  
85 women had full sexual health screening  
111 women have been tested for Hep B  
304 women were tested for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea  
63 individual women regularly used our needle exchange  
185 women have received support with drug issues  
- 12 of the women we supported chose to exit sex work |
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| Awayout              | Stockton on Tees | - Substance misuse programmes  
- Womens recovery  
- RISE family project  
- Coaching and mentoring  
- Community hubs  
- Café  
- Youth outreach | We use an outreach model and are extremely effective in engaging hard to reach groups and making significant, measurable changes to both the individual and the community around them. With young women it is recognised that it can take up to 6 YEARS to be ‘free from the physical and mental scars created by addiction, abuse and sexual exploitation.  
In the past year,  
• we reached out to 1,182 women and young people.  
• Of those, 355 went on to engage in regular support, recovery or preventative activities  
• 247 of these either made significant changes, or were referred to further support outside of A Way Out. |
| One25                | Bristol         | Outreach van 5 nights a week  
Drop in centre  
Caseworker acces  
Advice and support from medical and other staff  
Food  
Courses/therapeutic sessions  
One to one caseworkers/advocates | • 37 women escaped street work  
• 72 women started training for work  
• 62 women found a safe place to live  
• 60 women reduced drug and alcohol use  
• Drop in centre had 2100 visits in 2011. |